



# TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health

Summer, 1999

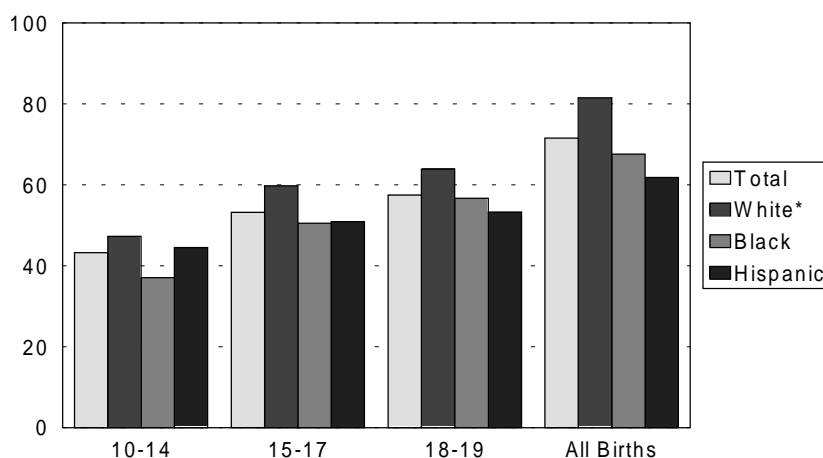
Vol.2, No.4

## Teen Births: Young Age and Its Association with Birth Outcomes

The teen birth rate in the United States has fallen steadily during the past several years after an increase from the mid 1980's. The rate for 1997 (52.3 per 1,000 women aged 15-19) is similar to rates experienced in the mid 1980's when the teen birth rate was at its lowest point. Texas has consistently had higher teen birth rates than the nation as a whole during recent years. In 1997, the Texas teen birth rate was 74.2 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 which has increased from the 1996 rate of 72.0. Birth rates for teens have fallen

### Percent Adequate Prenatal Care

by Age and Race/Ethnicity of Mother  
Texas Resident Births - 1997



\* Also includes other and unknown race/ethnicity



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in recent years in Texas, although not as much as the national rate. Between 1991 and 1997, birth rates for teens aged 15-19 fell 15.8% for the United States as a whole while they only fell 9.1% in Texas. Public health region 11 (lower Rio Grande Valley area) had the highest teen birth rates in 1997. Region 3 (Dallas-Fort Worth area) had the lowest teen birth rates.

The youngest of the teen mothers (10-14 age group) had a higher percentage of low birth weight babies (12.4 %) than all mothers whose percentage was 7.3%. Teen mothers had a lower percentage of adequate prenatal care as measured by the Kessner Index (43.3% for the 10-

14 age group) compared to all mothers who received 71.6% adequate prenatal care. Teen mothers began prenatal care less frequently in the first trimester (49.4% for the 10-14 age group) than all mothers whose percentage was 78.5%. This suggests that teens do not receive adequate prenatal care as much as, or as early as, older mothers.

Teen mothers in general had more adverse birth outcomes than all mothers. The Statistical Services Division staff at BVS is preparing a special report about teen births. When completed, the entire report will be available on the BVS website at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/bvs/reports.htm>.

## Matching Birth Certificates to Death Certificates

The Fraud Prevention Program of the Bureau of Vital Statistics coordinates the marking of "Deceased" on birth certificates of people who have recently died. This process is known as Birth and Death Matching.

The Fraud Prevention Program prepares a computer generated abstract which shows the place of birth for those who have recently died and were less than 56 years old. This abstract is sorted by place of birth and sent to the appropriate county clerk or local registrar. The registration official must notate conspicuously on the face of that individual's birth certificate that the person has died.

Local registrars are encouraged to mark the birth records of all individuals who have died as soon as they have received notification. The local registrar may become aware from a Report of Death form, a Death Cer-

tificate filed with them, an abstract of death from another county or the abstract sent out by the Fraud Prevention Program.

Only full certified photo copies of these birth records marked as "Deceased" should be issued to prevent someone from attempting to assume a false identity. Remote access records are flagged as "Deceased" and will not print, but flagging may take several months from the date of death. Remote records of the deceased should not be issued whether flagged or not.

Occasionally a death certificate for an infant who was born in Texas is filed; however, the birth certificate was not filed. In this case local registrars should see that the appropriate hospital or person file a matching birth certificate. If possible, the parents should not be contacted to file the

birth certificate in this case. An administrative filing of a birth certificate by the local registrar may be necessary.

### *Dear State Registrar*

**Who is responsible for returning the marriage license after a marriage has been conducted?**

The Texas Family Code §2.206 requires that the person who conducts the marriage ceremony return the license to the county clerk who issued the license not later than the 30th day after the ceremony is conducted.

**If a mother has a child and wants to put the father on the record, but they were not married and he died several months prior to the birth, what can she do?**

The mother would have to go to court and obtain a court order to add his name to the record.

If you have a question, please e-mail us at [bvswweb@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:bvswweb@tdh.state.tx.us), fax it to (512) 458-7233, or mail to Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX 78756-3191. Attn: Texas Vital Statistics News.

## Delayed Birth Registrations

### for Children Between the Ages of One and Four

This is the third part of a continuing series that started in the Winter, 1998 issue of the *Texas Vital Statistics News* which was entitled *What Happens When a Birth or Death Record Has Not Been Filed*.

After a search has been conducted through our office and we have determined that a birth certificate has not been filed, we will provide the forms for filing the delayed birth registration. If the child is between one and four years old, the following will explain the requirements for filing the delayed birth record.

#### **Born in a Licensed Institution**

If the child was born in a hospital or licensed birthing center, the Delayed Certificate of Birth form (VS-122 Rev 7/1996) must be completed and signed

by a parent in the presence of a Notary Public. A minimum of one supporting document is required. This supporting document should be a certification from the hospital or licensed birthing center which states the child's name, parent or parents' names, the date the child was born and that the child was born in the hospital or licensed birthing center.

The fee to file the delayed birth record is \$25.00. The fee for each certified copy of the birth record is \$11.00.

#### **Not Born in a Licensed Institution**

If the child was born at home or any other location outside of a hospital or licensed birthing center, the Delayed Certificate of Birth form (VS-122 Rev 7/1996) must be completed and signed by a parent in the presence of a Notary Public.

We also require proof of preg-

nancy and proof of the mother's residence in the registration district at the time of birth. For proof of pregnancy, we may accept a copy of a midwife's or doctor's record that was made within nine months preceding the date of birth which states the mother was pregnant. To prove that the mother resided in the registration district at the time of birth, we may accept a copy of a bill or receipt such as for a utility, credit card, or any purchase that would show the mother's name and address. The date of the bill or receipt should be within a few days prior to the date the child was born.

It would be in the child's best interest if the parents could also submit a document that states the child's date and place of birth and parents' names. If the child has received care, since the date of birth, at a clinic, doctor's office, or hospital, a copy of a record from

*continued on page 4...*

## Data Quality Unit Plays Vital Role

### in Birth and Death Registration

The Data Quality Unit of the Statistical Services Division is responsible for ensuring that data received from vital records is as accurate and complete as possible.

After a record is entered into the computer system, the electronic file is processed through computer-generated edits which identify records with suspect or incomplete information. The Data Quality Unit examines these records to determine if the information provided is correct.

Some of the more common items on the birth certificate that are verified with the hospital are:

- \* the mother's age is 45 years or greater
- \* the mother's date of birth is unknown
- \* the average # of cigarettes per

day by the mother is greater than 40

- \* the average # of drinks per week by the mother is greater than 20

The most frequent demographic error which occurs on death records is the "Date of Birth" and the "Date of Death" not supporting the "Age" indicated on the record. The Data Quality Unit contacts the funeral home to correct this discrepancy.

There are some errors on birth and death records that the Data Quality Unit is unable to detect. The mother's mailing address on the birth certificate and the decedent's social security number on the death certificate are two examples.

The Social Security Administration uses the mother's residence ad-

dress to mail the newborn's Social Security card. If the address is incorrect, the newborn's benefits such as social security or health insurance may be delayed.

An incorrect social security number on the death certificate may cause problems because this information is provided to several entities in order to update records. When social security numbers are incorrectly reported, individuals who are still alive may suddenly stop receiving retirement checks, or discover that they cannot vote or renew their driver's license.

For more information on the Data Quality Unit or how to improve the quality of the data reported on birth certificates or death certificates, contact the Statistical Services Division at (512) 458-7509.

## Texas' Paternity Opportunity Program

The Texas hospital-based Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) represents a successful collaboration among hospitals, the Office of the Attorney General (the Texas child support agency in Texas), and the Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS). Recognizing that each organization has different goals - and respecting the differences - was the first step in this joint effort to give fathers the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge paternity.

Also important: the decision by BVS to modify the Acknowledgment of Paternity form to meet child support's needs, and the training of hospital staff provided by the child support program. In the first year of POP (1993), five child support staff, located strategically throughout the State, trained hospital personnel at 283 birth hospitals and 60 birthing center across Texas.

Hospital birth registrars now distribute written material on paternity to unwed parents and offer them an opportunity to sign the paternity acknowledgment form. The signed forms are sent

to BVS where a computer tape is generated and forwarded to the child support agency. There the acknowledgements are matched with the child support cases. When a match is found, child support action is taken.

In fiscal year 1998, 101,743 children were born out of wedlock in Texas, with 58,264 fathers acknowledging paternity. Nearly 25,000 of the children whose paternity was acknowledged had cases with the child support agency. The acknowledgements proved invaluable in processing over 40,000 paternity orders.

Close cooperation and collaboration between the Bureau of Vital Statistics and Child Support Division has led the Texas legislature to change the Texas Family Code. Consistent with federal mandate for states to have a simple civil process to establish paternity, the signed Acknowledgment of Paternity will be a legal finding beginning September 1, 1999.

With this change, staff of more than 350 birthing centers and hospitals

in Texas, as well as midwives and workers at prenatal clinics need to be retrained on paternity acknowledgment procedures. The Office of the Attorney General and the Bureau of Vital Statistics are cooperating in providing this training throughout the state. Under the new legislation if a pregnant woman is married to someone other than the biological father, her husband must sign a denial of paternity before the biological father can acknowledge paternity.

If you would like more information about the Texas Paternity Opportunity Program, contact Joan Hutcheson at (512) 460-6317.



*Joan Hutcheson is Supervisor of the Paternity Opportunity Program, Office of the Attorney General, Child Support Division, Austin Texas.*

*Appeared in the "Child Support Report", Vol. XXI, No. 5, May 1999.*

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## Available Reports

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/bvs/reports.htm>

Texas Vital Statistics 1997

Texas Child Fatality Review Teams  
Annual Report 1995

1996 Mortality Report for Nursing  
Facilities and Related Institutions

The impact of alcohol use on mortality:  
new estimates from the revised Texas  
death certificate

Delayed childbearing: increased maternal  
age at first birth and its association with  
labor and delivery outcomes

Acknowledgment of paternity and its  
effect on unmarried mothers and birth  
outcomes

## From Delayed Birth Registrations

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one of the previously mentioned areas may be acceptable as supporting evidence.

The fees are the same as mentioned above, \$25.00 is required to file the delayed birth record. The fee for each certified copy of the birth record is \$11.00.

**Next Issue (Fall 1999): Delayed Birth Registrations for Children between the ages of 4 and 15.**

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